

CHRIST IS UNIQUE

April 3, 2014 (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

The following is excerpted from *The Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Offerings* by I.M. (Isaac Massey) Haldeman, 1925. Haldeman was the pastor of First Baptist Church of New York City for nearly 50 years, from 1884-1933. Though Haldeman did not have advanced formal theological training, he made up for this with a high native intellect, excellent gifts, a passion for Jesus Christ, a love for God's Word, diligent study habits, and a broad appetite for learning under the Headship of Christ. In recognition of this he was awarded an honorary D.D. from William Jewel College in 1909. He was a theological warrior who did not draw back from the public reproof of modernists and other false teachers, speaking against fellow Baptists such as Harry Emerson Fosdick and against Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah Witness cult. He was a crusader against worldliness in the churches. Bible teacher James M. Gray called him "the greatest prophet of the Lord now standing in any pulpit in this country." Said to be "the most influential preacher of prophetic themes in his generation," he interpreted Bible prophecy literally and emphasized the imminent return of Christ.

His life was unconcealed. He was continually open to inspection. Every eye watched Him, every ear was bent to listen, every word He spoke was weighed and analyzed, every step noted, and yet none dared bring the charge of sin against him. For two thousand years, He has been the object of intensive analysis. He has been subject to the white light of an unparalleled investigation.

His words have been taken apart, put into the laboratory of critical chemistry, tested in respect to base, to combination and compounded parts, but not an accent, not an emphasis has been found out of place, not a sentence or a word that need be changed, not a thought nor statement that must be reversed or recalled.

He stands out among men absolutely human, yet of an order entirely new, sinless, God filled, compassionate, sympathetic, going among the outcast and the worthless, among those sick in body, sick in soul, in daily contact with leprosy of body and leprosy of mind, uncovering pollution and shame and iniquity at every step; and yet, even as the sun that reveals the mud, the mire the slime and corruption, and is unstained by them, so He ate with publicans and sinners and shone more resplendently pure because of the contrasted evil and wrong revealed in them.

He spoke softly, gently, so graciously, that the officers sent by His foes to arrest Him as; a disturber of the public peace, enthralled by the sound of His voice, the accent of His words, and the marvelous measure of His thoughts, went back to those who sent them and said, 'Never man spake like this man.'

There were times, however, when His words had in them the note of distant thunder, and there was an upflash of flame, a light in His eyes as terrible as that which had flashed on Sinai.

When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion; they were to Him as sheep without a shepherd; they had been harried and skinned (such is the word in the original) by human wolves, they had been the prey of the avarice, injustice and tyranny of men; but when He spoke of a lost soul in hell, suffering, agonizing, tormented, His voice was cold, calm, emotionless, as the utterance of a judge, as hard as the decrees of eternity; forgiving a sinful woman taken in the act of a particular treason of sin, He poured forth a tidal sweep of anathema against religious formalism and hypocrisy, against false teaching and tradition as though indeed the day of unrestrained wrath and anger had come.

He is unique.

There never was anything like Him before. There has never been anything like Him since. He is as a white rose surrounded by scarlet poppies. As a smile of love against a scowl of hate. As a song above discord. As a shaft of light in the blackness of a starless midnight.

He was pure He was holy. He was sinless. Not even in death did His body see corruption. There is only collocation of terms that expresses Him; and that is, ‘Sinless perfection’” (I.M. Haldeman, *The Tabernacle Priesthood and Offerings*, 1925).

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